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GHANA

SUCCESS STORY

Outfitting Clothing Firms for Export

Company is developing its capacity to attract and handle large orders



Fashion designer Nora Bannerman aspires to bring Ghanaian-made clothing to bigger markets throughout Africa and the United States.

“We are putting Ghana on the radar as an exporter under AGOA of high quality garments,” said Nora Bannerman, founder and CEO of Sleek Garments.

On the wall of the Sleek Garments factory, overlooking a bustling assembly line of 300 workers, is a sign: “Quality First, Quantity Second”.

Sleek’s founder and CEO, Nora Bannerman, has held to that philosophy since her first years as a fashion designer. She is determined to maintain it as Sleek shifts into mass production, sewing thousands of shirts bound for Ross Stores, one of the largest discount clothing retailers in the United States.

After all, Bannerman said, Sleek’s emphasis on quality convinced a sourcing agent to place the order for 75,000 casual rayon shirts. The agent had heard of Sleek from California Link, another garment factory that, along with Sleek, is part of Ghana’s blooming apparel manufacturing cluster.

Ghana’s government has offered incentives that have encouraged several clothing factories to relocate and build there. Many of them export to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), which waives duties on select goods from eligible African countries. “We are putting Ghana on the radar as an exporter under AGOA of high-quality garments,” Bannerman said.

Bannerman also receives support from USAID’s West Africa Trade Hub, which conducts industry-specific training and accompanies clients to major trade shows in the United States in order to facilitate deal-making. The Trade Hub provided financial planning services and advised Bannerman as she sought pre-export financing to purchase fabric for the Ross order. Bannerman is now negotiating Sleek’s next large order with an American uniform company and planning to triple her workforce over the next few years.

“I dream of brands coming out of Ghana, supplying African markets as well as the huge U.S. market,” Bannerman said. “Everything is possible in this industry.”

Telling Our Story
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